



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS IN THE RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA

By D. S. WHITTLESEY

University of Chicago

Statement of the Problem

Nearly a hundred years ago President John Quincy Adams wrote:

. . . there are laws of political, as well as of physical gravitation; and if an apple, severed by the tempest from its native tree, cannot choose but fall to the ground, Cuba, forcibly disjoined from its own unnatural connexion with Spain, and incapable of self-support, can gravitate only towards the North American Union, which, by the same law of nature, cannot cast her off from its bosom.¹

It has been contended that this principle has a universal application, and for it has been coined the term:² "politico-geographical law of gravity." In its general application it may be stated as follows: islands which lie near the borders of continents tend to become politically subordinate to the most powerful mainland neighbor. Cuba is an island of the utmost strategic and commercial importance, having for its nearest continental neighbor the United States, one of the larger, richer, and more powerful nations in the world. On the other hand, the two areas are widely at variance in history, nationality, language, social institutions, and political experience. While their geography has attracted, their social and political life has repelled. The concurrence of these conflicting forces therefore ought to give some proof of the validity of the "law."

Environmental Factors Underlying the Problem

The location of Cuba and the United States has been of mutual importance. Cuba, lying at important crossroads of Caribbean and Gulf trade routes, commands the only two entrances to the Gulf of Mexico and one of the chief passages to the Caribbean Sea (Fig. 1). Thus it is in a position to bottle up the Gulf ports of the United States and to jeopard that nation's control of interoceanic canal routes. Furthermore, its many large and easily defensible harbors could serve as unexcelled bases for enemy ships engaged in blockading the ports or hampering the commerce of the United States. Conversely, for expeditions calculated to tamper with the political order of Cuba, the United States offers near-by shelter, particularly among the keys of Florida, which are separated from the populous sections of the continent by a waste of swamps. To commerce the proximity of island to continent is of basic import, for the short and cheap carriage

¹ Adams to Nelson, April 28, 1823, *32nd Congr., 1st Sess., House of Repr. Ex. Doc. No. 121*, p. 7.

² E. C. Semple: *American History and Its Geographic Conditions*, Boston and New York, 1903, p. 403. Cf. Friedrich Ratzel: *Politische Geographie*, Munich and Leipzig, 1897, pp. 386-391.

between Cuban ports and those of the southern and eastern coasts of North America has helped to make the United States Cuba's best customer and one of the countries from which it buys most heavily.

The climatic contrasts between the two domains, in conjunction with their proximity, have had further far-reaching results. Cuba, lying in the path of warm rainy trade winds, produces as its agricultural staples sugar

and tobacco, besides cacao and tropical fruits and nuts.³ These find a ready and constant market in the United States, which in turn can supply Cuba with cereals, meat products, and fabricated goods. Furthermore, the predominance of large-scale agriculture in Cuba opens an outlet near home for capital of American investors who wish to keep an eye on their projects. Finally, the fact that Cuban agriculture is chiefly of the plantation type resulted in the use of negro slaves, and the island was entangled for years in the perplexing slavery issue of the continent.

More recently the mild

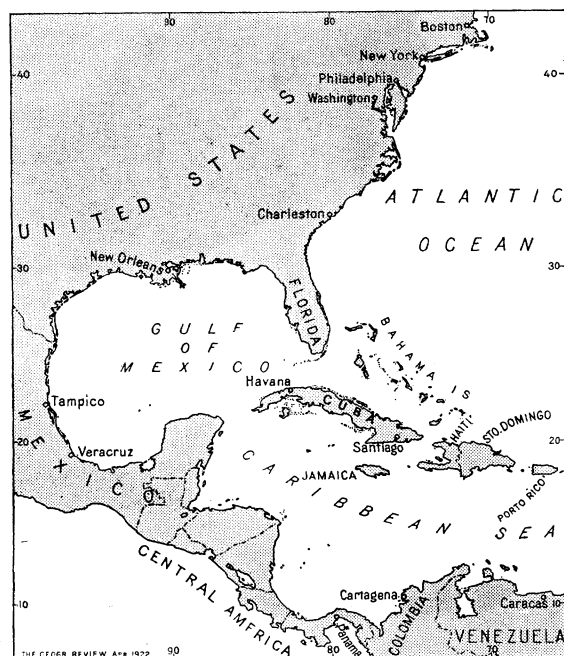


FIG. 1.—Sketch map to show the situation of Cuba in relation to the United States.

Cuban winters have attracted pleasure seekers from the rigorous climate of northern United States, and Cubans in turn have spent their summers in the northern Appalachians.

Even the mineral resources of the two areas are reciprocal. Cuba, deficient in mineral fuel, possesses a grade of iron which is necessary to the steel production of the United States; it also possesses copper. These commodities, finding their way to American ports, are replaced on the return voyage by coal and petroleum.

Relations During the Spanish Period

Geographically bound together as the two territories are, it is little wonder that agitation for their political union began very early in the history

³ See the preceding article, "Geographical Relations in the Development of Cuban Agriculture," by R. H. Whitbeck.

of the United States. In its incipency this movement was general in statement and procrastinating in operation, but with the increase in the political and commercial power of the young republic and the diminution in the political and commercial significance of Spain, the clamor grew to overwhelming uproar. At first based on geographic hypotheses, the demand for Cuba came by 1840 to be rested on political exigency; after 1865 the cry was changed to commercial necessity and in the years following 1895 to humanitarianism. But these variations in argument meant no desertion of geographic principles, since neither the politics, the commerce, nor the humanitarianism would have appealed in force had Cuba been remote from the shores of the United States. Herein can be traced, nevertheless, the ever widening circles of interest in the island among the people of the mainland.⁴

In the earliest days of the independence of the United States Thomas Pownall, governor of Massachusetts, foresaw the ultimate incorporation of the West Indies into the new North American state: "Whether the West Indies are naturally parts of the North American continent is a question of curious speculation; the whole must in the course of events become parts of the great North American domain."⁵

DEFINITE EXPRESSION IN FAVOR OF ANNEXATION

Definite pronouncements on Cuba, however, came only after the purchase of Louisiana and the consequent turning of the country's attention to expansion in other directions. It is not surprising that Jefferson, once committed to territorial extension, should put himself on record in favor of annexing Cuba, but it is a remarkable testimony to the state of his geographical outlook that he should have thought it could be defended without a navy. In 1809 he wrote:

. . . I would immediately erect a column on the southernmost limit of Cuba and inscribe on it *ne plus ultra* as to us in that direction. . . . It will be objected to our receiving Cuba that no limit can be drawn to our future acquisitions. Cuba can be defended by us without a navy, and this develops a principle which ought to limit our views. Nothing should ever be accepted which requires a navy to defend it.⁶

The purchase of Florida by the United States in 1819 once again turned the public mind to further acquisitions in that direction, and after 1820 nearly every administrative leader of three decades is on record in reference to Cuba. The keynote to this period (1820-1848) was the fear of the United States that some strong European power, either France or Britain, would

⁴ The following classes of sources are the chief reservoirs of information: geographic theories and political platforms can be traced in the speeches and writings of public men; commercial interests found voice through the same channels, in periodical literature, and in government reports on commerce; humanitarianism was in part the cloak thrown about the subject by those who had interests of a more material sort, and its effects may be followed in public opinion during 1898.

⁵ Quoted in A. B. Hart: *The Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, New York, 1901, p. 108.

⁶ Jefferson to Madison, April 27, 1809; quoted in F. E. Chadwick: *The Relations of the United States and Spain—Diplomacy*, New York, 1909, p. 216.

seize the coveted island before it was ripe to drop into the lap of its neighbor. This corroborates the contention that the attraction of a more remote but stronger country may prove more potent than that of a country nearer but weaker.⁷ That there was ground for this fear is shown by a cool statement of the *London Times*:

. . . the certainty that the Floridas must belong to the United States, brings with it an invincible necessity for the acquisition of Cuba by the British crown. . . . The two transactions are necessary parts of the same whole, and must, if possible, be put out of hand together.⁸

By 1823 Jefferson had given up hope of annexing the island and aspired only to keep it from falling into British hands, by supporting its independence.⁹

J. Q. Adams was more hopeful of ultimate union, and in a far-sighted statement to the Spanish minister he set forth the reasons for the ambitions of his country:

. . . [Cuba's] commanding position, with reference to the Gulf of Mexico and the West India seas; the character of its population; its situation midway between our southern coast and the island of St. Domingo; its safe and capacious harbor of the Havana, fronting a long line of our shores destitute of the same advantage; the nature of its productions and of its wants, furnishing the supplies and needing the returns of a commerce immensely profitable and mutually beneficial,—give it an importance in the sum of our national interests with which that of no other foreign territory can be compared. . . .¹⁰

So strong were his convictions that before the end of his term in office he sent as minister to Spain his confidential friend, A. H. Everett, who immediately began sounding the government as to its willingness to surrender the island to the United States as security for a loan of twenty million dollars without interest, payable at the pleasure of the Spanish government.¹¹ By thus adopting the methods of loan sharks Everett hoped to foreclose at some future date.

The bugbear of European aggression was momentarily submerged in a flood of fears lest Cuba become prematurely independent. In the heat of winning independence for Mexico and Colombia, Bolivar proposed to strike at the mother country through her only remaining loyal possessions in the New World, Cuba and Porto Rico (Fig. 1).¹² In a panic the Secretary of State, Henry Clay, undertook to beg the Russian government to induce Spain to give up her futile efforts to reconquer Mexico and Colombia.¹³ Simultaneous overtures to the republics themselves resulted in relinquishment of their project, and the United States was freed from further apprehension in that quarter. The ever-present possibility of European action

⁷ Semple, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

⁸ Quoted in *Niles' Weekly Register*, Vol. 17, January 8, 1820, p. 305.

⁹ Jefferson to Monroe, October 24, 1823, in Writings, Monticello edit., 20 vols., Washington, D. C., 1904-05; reference in Vol. 15, p. 479.

¹⁰ Adams to Nelson, April 28, 1823, 32nd Congr., 1st Sess., *House of Repr. Ex. Doc. No. 121*, p. 6.

¹¹ Everett to Adams, cited in "Cuba without War," *Scribner's Monthly*, Vol. 11, 1875-76, pp. 876-879.

¹² Number Four of the announced purposes of the Panama Congress of 1826, quoted in Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

¹³ Clay to Middleton, May 10, 1825, in "American State Papers, Class I, Foreign Relations," Vol. 5, 1858, pp. 846-849.

kept the State Department on the anxious seat as now and again British or French war vessels would make visits to Cuban waters. Spain was repeatedly warned that the United States would not tolerate the acquisition of Cuba by any other power,¹⁴ and intimations of the same tenor were conveyed to the governments of Great Britain and France.¹⁵

COMPLICATIONS OF THE SLAVE QUESTION

A further political complication in American relations with Cuba made its appearance about 1825 and had thenceforth to be seriously reckoned with. This was the fact that slaves were held in Cuba with profit. To the slave-holding oligarchy in the Southern States this appealed in two aspects: first, they expected and dreaded emancipation of Cuban slaves in case the island were taken over by any of the countries which seemed likely to desire it; second, they feared that independence would lead to the installation of a negro state. In either case the example to slaves on the near-by continent would be dangerous to their masters. Clay hinted at the existence of this sentiment in his Russian letter.¹⁶ As time went on it received more concise statement in the mouths of various leaders who were in sympathy with the dominant South. A letter from Webster to the American consul at Havana is typical:

It is alleged that the British ministry and abolition societies . . . are . . . offering independence to the creoles, on condition that they will unite with the colored people in effecting a general emancipation of the slaves, and in converting the government into a *black military republic*, under British protection. . . . With 600,000 blacks in Cuba, and 800,000 in her West India islands, [Britain] will, it is said, strike a deathblow at the existence of slavery in the United States.¹⁷

This indicates clearly that while the fear of British control of the island was still present in the public mind, fear of British interference with the slave system had become far more potent; until 1860 it continued to be the dominant motive in the Cuban policy of the United States. After the Mexican War, when the slaveholders were flushed with victory and the mind of the whole country was favorably disposed toward further expansion, the administration was moved to put forth renewed efforts to annex the coveted island. President Polk and his cabinet determined to offer Spain a hundred million dollars,¹⁸ but in the letter of authorization sent to the Spanish minister the urgent motive for desiring the cession was not mentioned, military expediency and commercial value being the assigned causes.¹⁹

¹⁴ Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 220. Van Buren to Van Ness, 32nd Congr., 1st Sess., House of Repr. Ex. Doc. No. 121, p. 26.

¹⁵ Stevenson to Forsyth, *ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁶ Work cited in footnote 13.

¹⁷ Webster to Campbell, January 14, 1843, marked "Private and confidential," 32nd Congr. 1st Sess., House of Repr. Ex. Doc. No. 121, p. 39.

¹⁸ M. M. Quaife, edit.: The Diary of James K. Polk During His Presidency, 1845 to 1849, 4 vols., Chicago, 1910; reference in Vol. 3, pp. 469-493, *passim*.

¹⁹ Buchanan to Saunders, June 17, 1848, 32nd Congr., 1st Sess., House of Repr. Ex. Doc. No. 121, pp. 42-49.

The rejection by Spain of this offer in no wise discouraged the Southern leaders, who, until the outbreak of the Civil War, never relaxed their efforts to possess themselves of the island. To a proposal by France and Great Britain of a tripartite guarantee of the existing régime in Cuba, they argued the special strategic and commercial interests of the United States as the excuse for prospective annexation:

. . . it would seem impossible for any one who reflects upon the events glanced at in this note to mistake the law of American growth and progress, or think it can be ultimately arrested by a convention like that proposed. In the judgment of the President, it would be as easy to throw a dam from Cape Florida to Cuba, in the hope of stopping the flow of the gulf stream, as to attempt, by a compact like this, to fix the fortunes of Cuba "now and for hereafter." . . .²⁰

THE OSTEND MANIFESTO

The climax of this frenzy for annexation came with the Ostend Manifesto and its consequent agitation: in the autumn of 1854 the ministers of the United States to Great Britain, France, and Spain—two of them Southerners and the third completely in sympathy with the South—sent to the Secretary of State a letter advocating seizure of the island. It is notable for its extreme frankness:

Indeed the Union can never enjoy repose, nor possess reliable security, as long as Cuba is not embraced within its boundaries. . . .

After we shall have offered Spain a price for Cuba far beyond its present value, and this shall have been refused, . . . then, by every law, human and divine, we shall be justified in wresting it from Spain, if we possess the power; and this upon the very same principle that would justify an individual in tearing down the burning house of his neighbor if there were no other means of preventing the flames from destroying his own home.²¹

The publication of this rash statement was fervently received in the United States, and throughout the winter the war spirit was fanned by the newspapers, especially by the Washington (D. C.) *Union*, a sheet controlled by a close friend of Buchanan, one of the authors of the Manifesto.²² Anticipating repudiation by the North, the administration refused to take the proposed steps without provocation by Spain, and the effort came to nothing.²³ Buchanan afterward sought to use his presidential office to gain the desired end, and the Southern periodicals did not cease discussing the Cuban situation from all angles.²⁴

TRADE RELATIONS AND CUBAN "INSURRECTOS"

An interest of increasing importance was the commercial development. Of Cuban exports of the day—sugar, copper ore, coffee, tobacco²⁵—the

²⁰ Edward Everett to the Comte de Sartiges, December 1, 1852, in "Correspondence on the Proposed Tripartite Convention Relative to Cuba," Boston, 1853, pp. 42-43.

²¹ Buchanan, Mason, and Soule to Marcy, October 5, 1854; quoted in Chadwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 263, 266.

²² Sidney Webster: Mr. Marcy, the Cuban Question and the Ostend Manifesto, *Political Sci. Quart.*, Vol. 8, 1893, pp. 1-32; reference on pp. 26-27.

²³ Marcy to Shepard, April 15, 1855; quoted in J. B. Moore: The Question of Cuban Belligerency, *Fcrum*, Vol. 21, 1896, pp. 288-300; reference on p. 300.

²⁴ *De Bow's Review* and *Southern Quarterly Review*, *passim*.

²⁵ *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, Vol. 7, 1842, p. 330.

United States perennially consumed more than all other countries combined. Of imports the United States contributed a smaller share, chiefly because of the excessive tariffs levied by Spain on all goods of foreign origin; breadstuffs and manufactured goods were at the outset and consistently have remained the staples of the import trade.²⁶ A long succession of prosperous years in Cuba, unaffected even by the panic of 1837 and interrupted only by a revolt in 1828, came to an end in 1844 with a drought followed by a destructive hurricane.²⁷

The succeeding depression worked hardship which naturally enough was laid to the door of the Spanish tariff laws. The discontent awakened a sympathetic response in the United States, and in 1849 Cuban *insurrectos* for the first time enlisted American citizens in their plans and used American ports as naval bases for filibustering expeditions. The first such venture was suppressed by United States authorities in New York, and the agitators consequently moved their headquarters to New Orleans, nearer the scene of operations and in the heart of the sympathetic Southland. Subsequent failure of co-operation in Cuba led to seizure of the conspirators by the Spanish authorities (in 1851), but their connection with the United States so exasperated these officials that American ships calling at ports of the island were subjected to numerous annoyances, culminating in the confiscation of the cargo of the *Black Warrior* in 1854. A tardy apology closed the incident, and the next few years saw an unprecedented expansion of trade between island and mainland. The financial crisis of 1857 and the Civil War played havoc with this business, but the Cuban trade recovered more quickly than did commerce between the United States and other countries. In 1864 it registered more than a tenth of the total, the highest percentage ever reached. In general, the Cuban question was quiescent during the Civil War, more nearly a dead issue than at any other period since 1800.

CUBAN INSURRECTIONS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

In the United States the years which followed the Civil War were marked by the ascendancy of commercial and manufacturing interests. The republic had outgrown its childhood fears of British or French aggression; the continuance or abolition of slavery in Cuba was no longer an issue; but as a source of tropical products and as a market for the growing production of the United States the island took on a fresh importance. The keen-minded business men of the new United States grasped clearly the vital issue:

The material development of Cuba . . . is chiefly due to its proximity to the United States. From the latter she has acquired the impulse to act, and the fever of enterprise. She has obtained at a small cost, on account of the nearness of the coasts, the numberless mechanical implements to reduce the laborers in the manufactories of sugar, and to convey it quickly to the coast. . . . Without that [United States] market of thirty millions of peo-

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 40, 1859, p. 280.

²⁷ D. P. Bailey: The Currency and Commerce of Cuba, *Banker's Magazine*, Vol. 35, 1880-81, pp. 697-704; reference on p. 699.

ple, Cuba's production would have remained wretchedly small. . . . Her well-being is not altered through Spain's disturbances, but by the pecuniary circumstances of Anglo-American merchants. . . .²⁸

Contingencies affecting the commerce between the two countries were bound to react sharply upon their political relations. This is admirably illustrated by a comparison of the two insurrections which raged during the period. The first of these broke out in 1869 and continued intermittently for ten years; the second flamed forth in 1895 and was followed by the war between the United States and Spain in 1898. The two bear striking superficial likeness: both were fomented by Cubans resident in Cuba and abetted by Cubans resident in the United States; both began in the eastern end of the island and spread westward; both were carried on by guerrilla warfare and the destruction of property, especially sugar plantations; both involved a small number of Americans who insisted on lending aid to the *insurrectos*; both were marked by destruction of the lives and property of American citizens—acts which led to serious diplomatic crises. Why was one allowed to drag on for ten horrible years, whereas the other led to speedy intervention? Upon the answer hangs the solution of the problem under consideration, for if non-geographic factors are shown to be of major importance, the "politico-geographical law of gravity" must be declared unconstitutional, as least so far as this case is concerned.

A careful study of conditions between 1865 and 1896 shows that the similarity between the two insurrections was apparent rather than real, for in several essential particulars the fifteen years which elapsed between them altered the state of affairs. During the Ten Years War one of the shrewdest editors in the United States repeatedly declared that there was no sympathy with the Cubans except among "manufacturers of issues."²⁹ To be sure, the country was brought to a war pitch in 1873 by the capture of a vessel (the *Virginius*) flying the American flag and the summary execution of fifty of her passengers, but the excitement had so far died out three years later that the same editor could affirm that only the yellow press desired intervention and that there was less war spirit in the country than at any time within the previous fifty years.³⁰ Moreover, this was the very year in which President Grant made a gesture to end the contest by threatening intervention, on the ground that American property was being destroyed, that American commerce was being interfered with, that political exiles were taking refuge in the United States where they became disturbers of the peace, and that world-wide ideals of humanity were being violated.³¹ The threat was not followed by action, apparently because the list of grievances stirred no response among the American people. The revolutionists held only a small part of the eastern end of the island, much of which

²⁸ Spain and Cuba: The Geneva Pamphlet on the Relations Between Spain and Cuba, New York, 1876, p. 36.

²⁹ *The Nation*, Vol. 9, 1869, p. 24.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, 1875, pp. 335-336.

³¹ Fish to Cushing, "Paper No. 266," 44th Congr., 1st Sess., House of Repr. Ex. Doc. No. 90, pp. 3-12.

was in a state of nature, and their depredations on the property of American citizens were confined to burning cane fields belonging to those who refused to pay blackmail. Even planters whose fields were ravaged suffered little, for cane is only slightly damaged if ground within a fortnight after burning.³² Furthermore, in spite of some interference with commerce, there was no serious disturbance of trade, for the total foreign commerce increased during the insurrection,³³ and that with the United States reached in 1874 the highest figure, with one exception, ever attained during the Spanish ascendancy. Moreover, the drop in 1875 can as well be charged against the panic of 1873 as against the Cuban insurrection. This singular prosperity in war time and in the theater of operations can be explained in part by the facts that the revolutionists held not a single port, even in their eastern stronghold, and that the greater part of the wealth and population was in the western end of the island, the district never threatened by revolt.³⁴ While it is true that the disturbances drove many political refugees to the shelter of the neighboring States, especially planters of native birth whose sympathy with the insurrection had cost them their property, yet their propaganda was so ill-organized before 1890 that they cannot have been very troublesome to the American government. Finally, the sentiment of humanitarianism was not sufficiently developed to lend support to intervention.³⁵

GROWTH OF COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

During the interval between the two revolts, however, all this was changed. The property holdings of Americans in the island increased amazingly; the confiscated lands of exiled "patriots" attracted the surplus capital of those who prospered under the post-bellum régime in the United States. President Cleveland estimated that in 1896 thirty to fifty million dollars of American money were invested in Cuban plantations, railroads, and mines.³⁶ Of this amount, some ten or fifteen million seem to have been in the form of advances by American merchants upon the sugar crop of 1896.³⁷ Commerce between the two countries displayed an equally astonishing increase. Immediately after the close of the Ten Years War there was a sharp slump, it is true, but this was in part a reflex of the poor state of the general foreign trade of the United States and in part a consequence of unsettled economic conditions in Cuba arising from the abolition of slavery and from increased taxation,—both concomitants of the war. After 1885

³² Murat Halstead: *Our Cuban Neighbors and Their Struggle for Liberty*, *Amer. Rev. of Reviews*, Vol. 13, 1896, pp. 419-438; reference on p. 420. See also *The Nation*, Vol. 22, 1876, p. 110.

³³ Memorandum of Fernando Calderon y Collantes to Secretary Fish, February 3, 1876; *54th Congr., 1st Sess., Senate Doc. No. 213*, pp. 50-54.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *The Nation*, Vol. 9, 1869, p. 24; Vol. 21, 1875, pp. 335-336.

³⁶ Annual Message of December 7, 1896; in J. D. Richardson: *A Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*, 10 vols., published by authority of Congress, 1898; reference in Vol. 9, p. 718.

³⁷ A. S. Hershey: *The Recognition of Cuban Belligerency*, *Annals Amer. Acad. of Polit. and Soc. Sci.*, Vol. 7, 1896, pp. 450-461; reference on p. 457, note.

trade increased by leaps until 1893, when it reached its maximum for the century. The great volume of commerce in this year was due to reciprocity between the United States and Spain, which became partially effective in July, 1891, and fully operative in July, 1892. By the terms of this arrangement sugar, cacao, coffee, hides, coal, petroleum, and machinery were allowed shipment free of duty, and the tariff on flour was reduced fifty per cent.³⁸ Since these were the principal items of trade between island and mainland,³⁹ the physical environment for the first time was given unrestricted play, and the results showed how harmful had been the self-seeking policy of Spain. The British consul general at Havana complained that "under the recent reciprocity treaty the United States of America practically supplies all the wants of the island and receives all its produce."⁴⁰ Since this trade was carried almost wholly in American bottoms, American shipping interests were benefited by the increase.⁴¹

Not only were the economic interests of the United States in Cuba broadened between 1879 and 1895, but less material bonds likewise were strengthened. On account of the proximity of the United States to their island, wealthy Cubans had for long sent their children here to be educated. After the failure of the revolt of 1869-1879 many of its leaders migrated to the continent. Numbers of them became citizens of the United States, and nearly all engaged in furthering the interests of the anti-Spanish group in Cuba. By 1892 it was said that most of the "patriots" were in New York and Florida, there being no organized revolutionary party in Cuba itself.⁴² The inevitable consequence of the expanding economic and social intercourse between mainland and island was augmented interest on the part of the Americans in the affairs of Cuba.

THE INSURRECTION OF 1895

Such, then, was the situation in February, 1895, when insurrection once more broke out in eastern Cuba. It is generally agreed that the cause of the upflare was economic distress. The panic of 1893 marked the beginning, and the slump in foreign trade thus occasioned was intensified by the abrogation of reciprocity in 1894. At about the same time the beet sugar of central and western United States was becoming a formidable competitor of cane sugar. The sudden contraction of the market resulted in throwing out of work great numbers of Cuban plantation laborers, who formed the arm of the movement whose head was in New York—the so-called Junta. This clique had long been preparing for the eventuality now at hand: "trunkfuls of Cuban bonds," payable upon recognition of the

³⁸ "Reciprocity with Spain," *Quart. Register of Current History*, Vol. 1, 1891-92, pp. 218-220.

³⁹ The Foreign Commerce and Navigation of the United States, 1906, U. S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁰ Quoted by E. S. Gould: Commercial Relations between Cuba and the United States, *Engineering Mag.*, Vol. 7, 1894, pp. 500-508; reference on p. 504.

⁴¹ Thomas Jordan: Why we Need Cuba, *Forum*, Vol. 11, 1891, pp. 559-567; reference on pp. 562-563.

⁴² Rollo Ogden: Spain, Cuba, and the United States, *Chautauquan*, Vol. 14, 1891-92, pp. 565-569; reference on p. 567.

Cuban Republic by Congress, had been distributed gratis among journalists and sold to Cuban sympathizers at three to ten cents on the dollar;⁴³ arms and ammunition had been collected; and filibustering expeditions had been arranged. When once the insurrection was under way, stores were smuggled out of United States ports, and isolated points along its fifty-five hundred miles of coast line south of New York (Fig. 1) were used as outfitting stations for seventy-one reported filibusters. These were aided greatly by the lonely keys of Florida. "It was the proximity of the United States and not merely Cuban energy, supported by the popular good-will of the country, which made the Union the principal source of Cuban supply. Exactly the same elements that made the close and extensive commercial relations in time of peace caused the active commerce in war material in the time of war."⁴⁴ . . ."

The difficulties confronting the United States government that arose from Cuban scheming were heightened by the acts of individual Americans. Several newspaper reporters in Cuba were harshly treated by the Spanish officials there; a Philadelphian importer of bananas, "finding his business destroyed by the outbreak of the revolution, promptly turned his ships into filibusters, and, after landing many cargoes of arms and ammunition, was eventually tried and convicted in a United States court;"⁴⁵ the action of other captains of American ships was from time to time so suspicious that the Cuban authorities were led to take unwarranted protective measures.

While relations with the United States were thus becoming strained, the utmost exertions of Spain were insufficient to cope with the insurrection. Tropical diseases decimated troops fresh from Europe, and the rugged and forested country enabled the natives to wage deadly guerrilla warfare.⁴⁶ As in the Ten Years War, the revolt originated in the east; but this time it spread rapidly westward until the glare of burning cane fields could be seen from Havana. The policy of the insurgents was to destroy all cane fields and sugar-refining machinery; the policy of the Spanish was to starve the revolt by cutting off importations of food and preventing agriculture except within the Spanish lines. Thus caught between two enemies, trade continued to dwindle, until in 1897 the United States was doing less business with Cuba than in any year for four decades. Even the American intervention, which, by severing formal commercial relations, in the next year reduced commerce to its lowest ebb since 1850, induced only a relatively slight diminution in the total volume of trade, and the exports of Cuban goods actually increased. Americans who had plantations on the island stood to lose not only the revenue from them but all movable property as well, and the advances on the sugar crop amounted to a dead loss. Natur-

⁴³ *The Nation*, Vol. 66, 1898, p. 255.

⁴⁴ Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

⁴⁵ R. T. Hill: Cuba and Porto Rico, New York, 1898, p. 81.

⁴⁶ T. Estrada Palma to Secretary Olney, December 7, 1895, 54th Congr., 1st Sess., *Senate Document No. 166*, p. 13.

ally, injured Americans were bitter in their complaints; and the story of pecuniary loss frequently involved a tale of horrible outrage, such as generally accompanies guerrilla fighting. Public opinion in the United States demanded mitigation of the evils, and this temper was judiciously inflamed by politicians with ulterior motives⁴⁷ and by the yellow press.⁴⁸ The matter could not be kept out of Congress, which by resolution urged the President to take a stand (February–April, 1896).⁴⁹ The election platforms of both parties contained provisions committing their adherents to put an end to the Cuban disturbances, and, although the issue was buried under the avalanche of free silver, it remained—the index to an unavoidable predicament, viz.: the geographic proximity of Cuba. In his last annual message, President Cleveland felt compelled to devote considerable attention to Cuba.

Were the Spanish armies able to meet their antagonists in the open or in pitched battle, prompt and decisive results might be looked for, and the immense superiority of the Spanish forces in numbers, discipline, and equipment could hardly fail to tell greatly to their advantage. But they are called upon to face a foe that shuns general engagements, that can choose and does choose its own ground, that from the nature of the country is visible or invisible at pleasure, and that fights only from ambush and when all the advantages of position and numbers are on its side. In a country where all that is indispensable to life in the way of food, clothing, and shelter is so easily obtainable, especially by those born and bred on the soil, it is obvious that there is hardly a limit to the time during which hostilities of this sort may be prolonged.⁵⁰

INTERVENTION

The new administration turned at once to the task of settling the difficulty on a peaceful basis, but the President's efforts were nullified by the political parties, which were now racing to see which could gain the credit of snatching Cuba from the weakening grasp of Spain. The destruction of the United States battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898, heightened popular excitement and led directly to the crisis of April. On the eleventh of that month, McKinley sent a war message to Congress, carefully omitting mention of the future status of the island. The Republican House of Representatives responded dutifully; but in the Senate, where the interests of the Democratic West and South were stronger, a conflict occurred.⁵¹ Besides the western and southern sugar-growers' fear of competition should Cuba become a part of the United States, there was in these sections a sincere desire to give the island its long-sought independence. The Democratic and Populist senators managed to have inserted in the resolutions calling for intervention, the following provisions:

That the people of the Island of Cuba are, and of right ought to be, free and independent.
That the United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sover-

⁴⁷ *The Nation*, Vol. 61, 1895, pp. 250–251.

⁴⁸ H. S. Pritchett: Some Recollections of President McKinley and the Cuban Intervention, *North American Rev.*, Vol. 180, 1909, pp. 397–403.

⁴⁹ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 28, Part II, pp. 1317 *et seq.*

⁵⁰ Annual Message, December 7, 1896, *loc. cit.*, p. 717.

⁵¹ *Outlook*, Vol. 58, 1898, April 23, pp. 995–996.

eignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the Island to its people.⁵²

Thus committed to a reversal of its century-old policy, the United States government entered the lists against Spain.

THE WAR WITH SPAIN

The geographic basis of the strategy of warfare is universally recognized. It therefore is unnecessary to discuss the operations of the War with Spain in detail.

Because of the insular character of the bone of contention, the issue was staked inevitably on a naval struggle. At the outset Spain had a slight preponderance of available naval strength, but this was more than offset by the necessity of fighting at arm's length across the Atlantic, a necessity which arose from the position of Cuba, close to the United States. Conversely, the American navy could operate from a base at home. The land operations were made possible by the fleet, and, while they aided in forcing an early conclusion of hostilities, the Spanish cause finally was lost in the naval battle of Santiago.⁵³ Within a month of the capitulation of Santiago preliminary terms of peace were signed, and Cuba was made over to the keeping of the United States.

Cuba As a Dependency of the United States

As has been stated above, Congress, by a self-denying ordinance on the eve of the war, had disclaimed a desire to annex the island. Since this ordinance had been passed in response to the traditions and idealism of the American people, and in opposition to dominant economic interests, an important group in the country by no means considered Cuba's status settled thereby. Foiled in gaining complete control, this section of the public succeeded in passing through Congress as an amendment to an army appropriation bill certain provisions which Cuba was compelled to incorporate into her constitution before the American military occupation would be terminated. By these articles Cuba agreed to contract no debts beyond her interest-paying power nor otherwise to impair her independence; to permit the United States government "to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty . . ."; and to sell or lease lands necessary for coaling or naval stations of the United States.⁵⁴ These conditions having been complied with, the American troops were withdrawn in the spring of 1902. Thus the United States saved its face

⁵² *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, Vol. 30, 1899, Washington, D. C., pp. 738-739.

⁵³ The most useful writings on operations of the war are A. T. Mahan: *Lessons of the War with Spain*, Boston, 1899, and F. E. Chadwick: *The Relations of the United States and Spain—The Spanish-American War*, 2 vols., New York, 1911.

⁵⁴ The so-called Platt Amendment, passed March 2, 1901, *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, Vol. 31, 1901, Washington, D. C., pp. 897, 898.

before the world and at the same time safeguarded interests imposed on it by geography.

Proof that Cuba had not become independent but had only changed masters, appeared in 1906 when a revolution gave provocation for intervention in the destruction of property and excuse for it under the terms of the Platt Amendment. Troops were sent in to occupy the island, and there was widespread agitation among "planters, commercial men, and promoters" in the United States to have their government assume permanent administration of Cuban affairs.⁵⁵ The public felt, however, that the country was pledged to let Cuba work out its own destiny. Since stable native government satisfied most of the American interests there, the troops were withdrawn as soon as order was re-established.

A period of financial maladministration which threatened the economic prosperity of the island culminated in 1912 in election frauds and a second revolution. This time the American government dictated the selection of the chief executive under the guns of United States marines. There seems to have been less clamor for annexation than on the previous occasion. A third disturbance, likewise the outcome of a disputed presidential election, occurred in 1917. The United States again evidenced its intention to keep a firm rein upon its little neighbor, by giving the established government its moral support, backed by shipments of arms and ammunition and by the landing of marines at Santiago "to protect foreign interests."⁵⁶

EFFECT OF THE WORLD WAR

The World War greatly stimulated sugar production in Cuba in three ways: it eliminated from the world market most of the beet sugar of Europe; it increased the demand, partly as substitution for alcoholic liquor, partly as an army staple, and partly for the manufacture of munitions; and it reduced shipping to a point which cut off the East Indies as a competitor in the Atlantic hemisphere. Under this stimulus foreign money, mostly American, was drawn into the business of increasing the Cuban output at a greatly accelerated rate. In 1919 there were 196 refineries in Cuba, of which 70 were owned by Cuban, 62 by American, and the remainder by other foreign capitalists. The Cuban mills were mostly small, and more than half the output came from American factories, which represented about half the total fixed investment in the business. Three-fourths of the total product was shipped to the United States.⁵⁷

Under the influence of these conditions and of war prices fortunes were made by the score, and Havana became a resort of bonanza kings. For sound economic reasons Cuba followed the United States into war, and the

⁵⁵ J. W. Foster: The Annexation of Cuba, *The Independent*, Vol. 61, 1906, pp. 965-968; reference on p. 966.

⁵⁶ "The Insurrection in Cuba," *Am.r. Rev. of Reviews*, Vol. 55, 1917, p. 413. Cf. *The Independent*, Vol. 89, 1917, p. 344.

⁵⁷ W. J. Showalter: Cuba—The Sugar Mill of the Antilles, *Natl. Geogr. Mag.*, Vol. 38, 1920, pp. 1-33; W. W. Rasor: The Supremacy of the Sugar Industry in Cuba, *Pan-American Mag.*, Vol. 29, 1919, pp. 242-246. See also the preceding article, by R. H. Whitbeck, in this number of the *Review*.

fiscal machinery was geared to that of the continental republic. The Cuban National Bank, which had been established in 1905, was able to fix the standard of the Cuban dollar at the level maintained by the United States for its currency, and United States money, even to Federal Reserve bank notes, was made legal tender in Cuba.⁵⁸ Cuban sugar producers spent their summers in the Adirondacks, their fortunes in New York, and sent their children to eastern schools. A new interest in the English language sprang up throughout the island. It became evident that economic and social forms were shaping to the pattern of the physical environment. Political affairs could not hold aloof. Gradually party issues in Cuba came to center about future relations with the United States. The Conservative group supported the Platt Amendment, albeit urging that it be put in form of a treaty.⁵⁹

PROGRESS TOWARD STABILITY

The Liberal group opposed further interference by the United States, but agreed with their rivals that economic stability must be insured.⁶⁰ As an outcome of this discussion the Judge Advocate General of the United States Army was called in to formulate an election law which should guard against the disturbances that had marred every election held under native authority, save one, and which had more than once resulted in intervention. On the basis of this law, which was approved in August, 1919, the election of 1920 was held. Unfortunately it occurred when the country was suffering the sharp pains of sugar deflation, and the usual disputes and threats of revolt followed. Once again the United States was forced to intervene, but this time a single arbiter was sent instead of a detachment of marines. His efforts to compromise the dispute were successful. Thanks to financial aid from the United States Federal Reserve Bank the economic crisis was safely passed, and Cuba once more regained fiscal and political equilibrium.

By these means Cuba has arrived at a stage of economic, social, and political co-operation with the United States which seems to assure her a prosperous future. Although technically independent, it can hardly be asserted that her sovereignty is not in the safe-keeping of the United States, which for a century has hoped and schemed for some such outcome. The extirpation of yellow fever, the establishment of schools, the development of public works, and, above all, the stabilizing of finances and the assurance of security to person and to property, are all the result of meddling on the part of the United States. Because of these constructive measures trade has flourished, and wealth has replaced poverty.⁶¹

⁵⁸ W. H. Morales: Finance in Cuba, *Pan-American Mag.*, Vol. 27, 1918, pp. 147-148; George Marvin: Keeping Cuba Libre, *World's Work*, Vol. 34, 1917, pp. 553-567.

⁵⁹ "A Cuban View of the Platt Amendment," *Amer. Rev. of Reviews*, Vol. 56, 1917, pp. 539-540.

⁶⁰ "Cuban Criticism of the Platt Amendment," *ibid.*, Vol. 60, 1919, p. 95.

⁶¹ M. G. Menocal: Leonard Wood As Administrator, *Forum*, Vol. 63, 1920, pp. 277-278; W. J. Showalter, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

Solution of the Problem

In summarizing the foregoing discussion, it may be noted: first, that the United States always has desired to control Cuba; second, that during the years when it was too weak to seize the island outright, it effectually prevented any other power from filching it from Spain; third, that then followed a period when the tempting morsel would have been snapped up, had not internal division in America nullified all efforts to that end; fourth, that after unity was once more established, no conditions within Cuba stirred her neighbor to action until American economic interests in the island had experienced marked development; fifth, that these economic interests focussed attention upon the inhuman treatment being received by Cubans; and sixth, that when intervention had brought about control, that control was completely effective, in spite of limitations cast about it by the very humanitarianism which had been invoked to make intervention possible. Throughout these political ins and outs, the physical environment was playing its constant part. All the economic conditions were derived directly from it. The social interrelations, such as the rise of humanitarianism, are less obviously based on geography. And yet other nations as powerful and as civilized as the United States failed to be stirred to the point of intervention by Spanish barbarities, and the United States has at times withstood the temptation to intervene in behalf of equally abused but more remote peoples. The relations of Cuba and the United States prior to 1898 seem therefore to have been dictated, in all their larger aspects, by geography. The swiftness of the conclusion of the War with Spain seems clearly to have rested on environmental conditions, although the immensely greater force of the United States would hardly have failed to bear Spain down in time, under any circumstances. Since the war the geographic relation has urged the United States to set up and maintain a standard of government below which Cuba may not fall on penalty of subversion of her autonomy.

Finally, therefore, it may be concluded that, since Cuba was a strategically and economically important island, lying near a powerful continental neighbor but under the political control of a weak and remote country, and since geographic factors have been of basic importance in breaking those political ties and in bringing and maintaining Cuba under the suzerainty of the United States, the "politico-geographical law of gravity" stands in this instance as valid.